

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 201151

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. PRC: TANGSHAN QUAKE WILL HAVE ECONOMIC AFTERSHOCKS

CONSULATE GENERAL HONG KONG PREDICTS THAT THE JULY 28 TANGSHAN EARTHQUAKE, HITTING AN AREA ACCOUNTING FOR 10 PER CENT OF PRC INDUSTRIAL OUTPUT, WILL HAVE SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHINESE ECONOMY. THE CONSULATE NOTES:

--TANGSHAN'S KAILUAN COAL COMPLEX, CHINA'S LARGEST, PROBABLY SUFFERED HEAVY DAMAGE.

--DAMAGE TO TANGSHAN'S ELECTRICAL GRID SHOULD SERIOUSLY SLOW INDUSTRIAL GROWTH IN PEKING AND TIENTSIN.

--THE REPORTED CLOSURE OF TIENTSIN PORT, CHINA'S SECOND LARGEST, WILL TAX AN ALREADY OVERBURDENED INTERNAL

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 201151

TRANSPORT SYSTEM AND HAMPER FOREIGN TRADE.

CONSULATE COMMENT: WHILE CHINA HAS SHOWN REMARKABLE RESILIENCY IN COPING WITH NATURAL DISASTERS IN THE PAST, THE MAGNITUDE OF THE DISASTER AND ITS LOCATION IN THE HEART OF CHINA'S INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX WILL INEVITABLY FURTHER TAX PRC

RESOURCES. THIS MAY FORCE SOME HARD DECISIONS ON POLICY MAKERS AT A TIME WHEN CHINA'S LEADERSHIP IS IN A POOR POSITION TO ACT DECISIVELY. (SECRET) HONG KONG 9521, 8/12.)

2. SPAIN: MAPPING THE ROAD TOWARD DEMOCRACY

INFORMATION MINISTER REGUERA DISCUSSED SPAIN'S PLANS FOR DEMOCRATIZATION WITH AMBASSADOR STABLER AUGUST 11. HE NOTED:

--THE GOVERNMENT CAN COMPLETE A PROGRAM OF DEMOCRATIC REFORM AND CONDUCT ELECTIONS BY UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE, PERHAPS BY NEXT APRIL.

--AFTER CONSULTING WITH THE POLITICAL PARTIES, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD DRAFT A SERIES OF FAIRLY SIMPLE REFERENDUM QUESTIONS AND THEN, ASSUMING THEY WIN STRONG POPULAR SUPPORT, IMPLEMENT THE CHANGES BY DECREE.

--LEGALIZATION OF THE COMMUNISTS IS OUT OF THE QUESTION AND WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE APPROVED EVEN BY A NEW CORTES.

--POLITICAL FORMATIONS WOULD INCLUDE A CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC CENTER, A SOCIALIST LEFT AND A "NATIONAL MOVEMENT" RIGHT; ALL OTHERS WOULD BE INSIGNIFICANT. (CONFIDENTIAL) MADRID 6169, 8/11.)

3. PORTUGAL: EANES SHUFFLES CARDS, STRENGTHENS HAND

THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL, DECLARING REGIONAL MILITARY COMMANDERS COULD NO LONGER REMAIN ON THE COUNCIL, ANNOUNCED SEVERAL PERSONNEL SHIFTS IN PORTUGAL'S POLITICO-MILITARY
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PAGE 03 STATE 201151

STRUCTURE:

--TWO LEFTISTS UNPALATABLE TO ARMY RIGHT-WINGERS GAVE UP THEIR REGIONAL COMMANDS, KEY JOBS IN THE PRESENT STRUCTURE, TO REMAIN ON THE RC.

--TWO RIGHTISTS UNACCEPTABLE TO THE ARMY LEFT WERE NAMED MINISTERS TO MADEIRA AND THE AZORES, AND ARE

THUS OUT OF THE PICTURE.

--LISBON'S LEFTIST COMMANDER, TRUSTED BY EANES, WILL
BECOME MILITARY GOVERNOR BUT NONETHELESS REMAIN ON THE
COUNCIL.

EMBASSY COMMENT: THE FINAL OUTCOME OF THESE CHANGES WILL
DEPEND ON WHO IS NAMED TO THE VACANCIES. AT THIS POINT IT
LOOKS AS IF EANES, WITH POLITICAL SKILL AND SENSITIVITY,
HAS STRENGTHENED HIS AND THE MODERATES' CONTROL WHILE AT
THE SAME TIME NOT UNDULY UPSETTING THE LEFT OR THE RIGHT.
(SECRET) LISBON 5504, 8/12.)

4. RABIN PLEASED WITH US-ISRAELI RELATIONS

SPEAKING TO 100 ISRAELI LEADERS FROM THE US, PRIME MIN-
ISTER RABIN CHARACTERIZED ISRAEL'S RELATIONS WITH THE US AS
BEING AT THEIR PEAK: "WE HAVE ESTABLISHED A SOLID BASE OF
FRIENDSHIP, REGARDLESS OF WHO WINS THE ELECTION." HE CAU-
TIONED THAT US AID WAS NOT "IN THE POCKET" AND HARD WORK
WAS NEEDED TO ASSURE ITS CONTINUATION. (UNCLASSIFIED) TEL
AVIV 5536, 8/12.) KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT REFORM, ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, MORNING SUMMARY, SPEECHES, FORM OF GOVERNMENT, EARTHQUAKES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE201151
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: O: KAUFMANN
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760311-0950
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760855/aaaabvpa.tel
Line Count: 137
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SSO
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <04 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <01 SEP 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS
TAGS: PFOR, SWEL, ECON, PGOV, PINT, CH, SP, PO, US, IS, (RABIN, YITZHAK)
To: NSA DIA TRSY MULTIPLE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006